

**Johnston County Graduation Project  
West Johnston High School  
2011-2012**

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction of Graduation Project	2
Parent/ Student Agreement	3
Prospectus	4
Mentor Guidelines	5
Mentor Application	6-8
Mentor/Student Log	9
Product Information and Guidelines	10
Product Plan	11
Product Log	12
Booklet (Skinny) and E-Portfolio Requirements	13
Board Night Booklet Cover Instructions	14
Letter to Judges	15
Abstract	15
Resume	16
Thank You Letter to Mentor	17
Presentation Introduction and Guidelines	18

Dear West Johnston Senior,

The Johnston County Graduation Project is a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary performance assessment completed over time. The JCS Graduation Project provides students the opportunity to connect content knowledge, acquired skills, and work habits to real world situations and issues. Through the graduation project process, students will engage various specific skills that include computer knowledge, employability skills, information-retrieval skills, language skills – reading, language skills – writing, teamwork, and thinking/problem-solving skills. The JCS Graduation Project, consisting of four components (a research paper, a product, a portfolio, and an oral presentation), culminates in a student's final year of high school.

The first component is the research paper, which is researched and written in the junior year. It is a career-focused, passion, or interest-based paper. For example, if you have an interest in helping underprivileged children, then your research paper may have focused on an issue of child development.

The second component of the Graduation Project is the product itself. You must demonstrate through physical means an extension of your research. Continuing with the idea of child development, you may have discovered in your research that many children who are underprivileged do not get meals on the weekends. As a result of this discovery, you may decide to promote and collect nutritional food for the Backpack Buddies Program of Johnston County. Other ideas follow, but a minimum of 15 hours of work on the product must be documented by you and verified by your mentor and your English IV teacher.

A portfolio is the third component of the Graduation Project. The portfolio contains documentation of the project, visual steps in making the product, and other evidence pertinent to the Graduation Project. The portfolio contents are to be housed in an e-portfolio using <http://www.yolasite.com>.

The final component of the Graduation Project is the presentation of the project to a Senior Board composed of professional and lay persons from the community at large. This is the night that the Graduation Project becomes real as you deliver a seven to ten-minute presentation of your product, research paper, and portfolio before a panel of judges. The presentation relates the focus of the project and research and details the step-by-step creation of the product. This is your chance to show off your hard work and exhibit skills and knowledge learned throughout your high school career. Since time will become a precious commodity through the duration of this project, we advise you to use it wisely as you build from one component of the project to the next. This Graduation Project will represent a tremendous accomplishment for you as you leave your high school years behind and venture on to even greater successes. As always, the entire faculty is here to advise and guide you as needs arise.

Regards,

The Graduation Project Committee

**Johnston County Graduation Project  
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**Description:** The Johnston County Graduation Project is a culminating high school project.

The Graduation Project includes:

1. a research paper (Junior Paper)
2. a product
3. an e-portfolio with booklet (Yola and Skinny)
4. a presentation (PowerPoint Required)

**Student Requirements:** The student will

1. select and research a topic of interest, develop and write a research paper, and complete a product that is reflective of the Graduation Project topic (completed junior year)
2. write, speak, solve problems, and use real life skills, such as time management and organization
3. work with a mentor in collaboration with other community partners, business representatives, and other school-based personnel in the development of the Graduation Project
4. keep a product log and a mentor log, recording hours involved in the product
5. submit a completed research paper (Junior Paper), product reflecting a **minimum of 15 hours effort**, e-portfolio with booklet and other evidence at times designated by the established calendar
6. present the completed Graduation Project before a review panel composed of teachers, community partners, business representatives and/or other school personnel

I have read and understand the above requirements involving the Johnston County Graduation Project. I agree to abide by the requirements. I will conduct myself with the utmost professionalism in working with school and community leaders. I understand that once the Graduation Project is started, it must be completed within the designated time frame. I understand that it may be necessary for me to work with my mentor outside of regular school hours. **I understand that the Graduation Project is the student's responsibility**, and that the student is responsible for keeping track of all deadlines, etc. I realize that my success will depend on my ability to use community resources. **I understand that should I fail to successfully complete any part of the Graduation Project (research paper, product, e-portfolio with booklet, and presentation) I will not meet the Johnston County Schools Exit Standard requirements for graduation.** Each component of this Graduation Project depends on the other three components; therefore, I understand that in order to complete the Graduation Project requirements, **I must successfully complete all four components.**

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Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

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Student Signature and Date

## Graduation Project Prospectus

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

1. State the topic and thesis of your Junior Paper. Why did you choose this topic?
2. What exactly is your intended product?
3. Why did you choose this product, and how does it relate to your research?
4. Who have you selected for a mentor? What expertise does this person have which can help you with your product? (If you have not already chosen a mentor, describe what your perfect mentor would have to offer you.)
5. How old is your mentor? How far does the mentor live from you? What is your relationship (friend, non-immediate family, know him/her only through Grad Project, etc.) with your mentor?
6. What particular resources (tools, facilities, knowledge, etc.) do you already have for this product?
7. What progress have you made towards your Graduation Project (mentor, plan, contacts, actual hours, etc.)? Please list.

### **Mentor Guidelines and Responsibilities**

Every student needs support, guidance, and confidence throughout the Graduation Project; therefore, the mentor is required. Each senior will choose a mentor who has some expertise on the topic that the senior has chosen. *A mentor may be an in-school or outside consultant; however, he or she may not be a member of the student's immediate family.* The student will be responsible for making and keeping all appointments with the mentor. The student and the mentor are required to meet a minimum of five (5) times throughout the semester.

#### **The role of the mentor is:**

- to act as a primary resource for the student in the product phase;
- to assist the student in keeping a log of all activities completed while meeting with the mentor;
- to give the student practical knowledge in the area of the chosen topic;
- to assist the student in designing a product in the area of study; and
- to assist the student with the presentation phase of the project.

#### **The responsibilities of the mentor should include but are not limited to:**

- completing the volunteer/mentor application form;
- assisting the student with product development and completing and signing the product plan form;
- making contact with the student five or more times throughout the Graduation Project process;
- meeting with the senior to approve the proposed product;
- advising the senior during the preparation of the product;
- providing the student with feedback; and
- signing a student log of the time he or she spent advising the senior in this process.

**West Johnston High School  
Johnston County Schools Volunteer/Mentor Application**

In accordance with General Statute 115C-209.1, the School System may maintain a volunteer file on all volunteers. The records in this file are not generally open to the public but may be disclosed to the volunteer (you), the Superintendent and other supervisory staff, members of the Board of Education or the Board Attorney, the parent of any child whom you serve, or any other person who obtains a subpoena or court order.

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Business or Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the **Level I** activities in which you would be willing to serve:

Graduation Project Mentor

Resource Speaker

Senior Board Judge

Please list the name, position, and phone number of two persons who could provide a reference for you.

<b>Reference name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
<b>1.</b>		
<b>2.</b>		

I understand that by signing and submitting this form to the Johnston County Schools, I am giving the Johnston County Schools permission to conduct a criminal background check on me (not normally necessary for Level I volunteer). My signature indicates that all information provided on this form is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor Signature/ Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal Signature/ Date**

I am participating in the Graduation Project, which requires the assistance of an adult mentor with expertise on the topic I am researching. I understand that I am responsible for making and keeping any and all appointments that we make and that I am responsible for meeting with you five or more times. I also understand that at the end of my Graduation Project, you will sign an evaluation and verification sheet. If you have any questions, please contact my English IV Teacher, \_\_\_\_\_, at (919)934-7333. In advance, I thank you for your time and your willingness to be a part of my education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Student / Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent/Guardian / Date**

**MENTORS, if you are employed by Johnston County Schools, stop here.  
All others please continue with Part II of this application on the next two pages.**

**West Johnston High School  
Johnston County Schools Volunteer/Mentor Application**

**CONSENT TO PERFORM CRIMINAL HISTORY/BACKGROUND CHECK  
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FCRA (FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT)  
Please print legibly**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_  
 Maiden or other name(s) used in any and all other records \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*\*Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*\*Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Race \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*\*Driver's License State of Issue \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*DL Number \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*REQUIRED INFORMATION, TO BE USED FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS ONLY  
AND NOT A PART OF THE PERSONNEL FILE.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am an applicant for employment/volunteerism with \_\_\_\_\_ and have been advised that as a part of the application process, the district conducts criminal history background checks. I do hereby consent to the district use of any information provided during the application process in performing the criminal history checks. The district has informed me that I have the right to review and challenge any negative information that would adversely impact a decision to offer employment / volunteerism. In addition, I have been informed that I will have a reasonable opportunity to clear up any mistaken information reported within a reasonable time frame established within the sole discretion of the district. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I have been advised that upon request I will be provided the name, address and telephone number of the reporting agency as well as the nature, substance and source of all information. The following are my responses to questions about my criminal history (if any).

**ALERT:** With the exception of minor traffic offenses or infractions, it is imperative that you list any and all convictions for any offenses, including but not limited to: DWI, underage possession of alcohol, or any other offenses. It is imperative that you list any offenses for which you have been convicted, plead guilty or no contest to, or received a prayer for judgment, or received "deferred prosecution" which is not yet finalized or expunged.

**Failure to disclose any of the above could result in denial of Level I and/or Level II approval.**

1. \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO Have you ever been convicted or entered a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* (no contest) to any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation (such as speeding).  
If yes, please provide details below.

State:	County:	Date of Offense: //
Details of conviction:		

**Continue to the next page.**

2. \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO Have you ever received deferred adjudication/prosecution or similar disposition that was not completed and resulted in a conviction for any federal, state or municipal offense (other than an offense for which all records pertaining to the offense have been expunged)?  
If yes, please provide details below.

State:	County:	Date of Offense:
Details of offense:		

3. \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense in a country outside the jurisdiction of the United States? If yes, please provide details below.

Country:	City:	Date of Offense:
Details of conviction:		

4. \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO As of the date of this consent form, do you have any pending criminal charges against you OR are you in a deferred prosecution or drug diversion program?  
If yes, please provide details below.

State:	County:	Date of Criminal Charge
Details of pending charges:		

THIS SECTION IS TO BE USED TO LIST ALL COUNTIES AND STATES OF RESIDENCE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OR AGE 18.

CITY/TOWN	COUNTY	STATE

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS CONSENT FORM IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE. IF ANY INFORMATION PROVES TO BE INCORRECT OR INCOMPLETE, I UNDERSTAND THAT GROUNDS FOR CANCELLING OF ANY AND ALL OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEERISM WILL EXIST AND MAY BE USED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DISTRICT.**

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT (PRINT NAME): \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Product

The product phase of the Graduation Project represents a hands-on experience dealing with some aspect of the research topic. This phase of the Project directs the student away from the books and out into the real world, allowing the student to apply the information gained in the research phase to create a product demonstrating learning and mastering of the topic. The creative process can take many forms including but not limited to construction, performance, volunteering, or artistic expression. The student is limited only by his imagination. The best products are those that are closely related to the research. The product should be something that is new to the student or perhaps an extension of prior knowledge, not a re-creation of a former activity. The completion of the product will demonstrate a learning stretch physically, emotionally, and intellectually for the student. Since the purpose of the product is to apply in a personal way the knowledge gained in the research phase, the product will be as diverse, unique, and varied as the student who creates it. ***Fundraising is highly discouraged and will require special approval from Principal Coates. STUDENTS MAY NOT HANDLE OR COLLECT ANY MONEY FOR ANY REASON!***

### Listed below are some possible products:

- a physical product: create a painting, design and sew a fashion outfit, write a computer program, rebuild an engine, construct a building or other structure
- a published written or multimedia product: write a mini anthology of short stories, a book of poetry, or a series of newspaper articles; create a video (product must be designed for a specific intended audience)
- a performance: dance or sing in a recital, act in a drama show
- a leadership experience: coach a sports team; conduct a service project for local shelters, charities, or other non-profit organizations; become an eagle scout
- a physical experience: train for and run a marathon, earn a brown belt in karate
- a self-improvement experience: earn pilot's license, earn certifications for various skills (yoga instructor, martial arts instructor, etc.)

### Guidelines for Product

1. **The product will be completed outside of the regular classroom.**
2. The product plan and the product log will be needed to verify the progress of the product. Physical evidence will be the actual product and visual documentation of the progress of the product: a video tape, photos, receipts, printed correspondence, volunteer logs, and/or certificates of completion.
3. Evidence of product completion will be included as part of the portfolio.
4. Expended time to complete a product may be no less than fifteen hours, which are to be documented in a product log. However, the student will probably spend an average of thirty hours completing the product. The student will need to complete a log entry for each occasion he/she works on the product.
5. West Johnston High School facilities may be used with permission from Mrs. Coates.

The **Product Rubric** is available on the WJHS website under the Graduation Project tab and on your English IV teacher's website.

**Product Plan**

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Research Topic** \_\_\_\_\_

What form will your product take? (Circle all that apply.)

Multimedia                      Community Involvement/Service                      Construction                      Other:

**Description of the Product:** *Describe the product, its purpose, and its relationship to the research. Be as specific and concrete as possible. Include materials needed and how much time will be required.*

**Task Analysis:** *List all the tasks that must be completed in order to finalize the product. Think through all the steps involved and the time needed for each task. What materials are needed? Give the timeline for each task.*

<b>TASK</b>	<b>ESTIMATED DATE OF COMPLETION</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **ACCEPTABLE**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**English IV Teacher's Signature and Date**



## Booklet and E-Portfolio Requirements

The booklet and e-portfolio are a collection of process pieces that serve as the final showcase of the student’s completed work and self-reflection on the Graduation Project. The Booklet and E-Portfolio will be used to enhance the presentation phase of the Graduation Project. The student will submit the Booklet and E-Portfolio to the judges for review so that they may obtain a deeper understanding of effort and accomplishments throughout the student’s Graduation Project. Additionally, both items will serve as part of the second or fourth quarter grade.

The **Booklet and E-Portfolio Rubric** is available on the WJHS website under the Graduation Project tab.

### Board Night Booklet (a.k.a. Skinny)

Required work in the Booklet (a.k.a. “Skinny”) will include information on the product and mentor, as well as Miscellaneous (non-photographic) evidence.

Following are the required contents for the booklet in order:

- Cover page
- Prospectus
- Product Plan
- Product Log
- Mentor Log
- Miscellaneous (*non-photographic*) evidence---receipts, flyers, signed volunteer logs, emails, business letters, flyers, permission slips, etc.

### E-Portfolio Requirements ([www.yolasite.com](http://www.yolasite.com))

Include the items below in your e-portfolio in the following order:

Tab/Page Title	Page Requirements
Home	Welcome to my e-portfolio. Keep it neat. Include name, title, and picture.
Resume	Resume and a professional looking photo of you
Personal Statement	Your college application essay or an equivalent 5-6 paragraph essay.
Abstract of Junior Research Paper	A one-page paper hitting the highlights of your Junior Research Paper.
Product Proposal	What do you plan on doing for your product? Be very specific.
JCGP Steps, Obstacles, & Successes	<p>Include a photo illustrating each step you took during the product phase (<b>12 photos and steps minimum</b>).</p> <p>Clearly caption and explain what is happening in each photo.</p> <p>Discuss obstacles for each step as they occurred.</p> <p>Discuss successes for each step as they occurred.</p> <p>Include a photo of you with your mentor and discuss how he/she contributed to your project.</p> <p>Explain your learning stretch (What was so difficult that you did not think you could get through it, but you did?)</p>

## **Graduation Project Booklet Cover**

You must create a Booklet cover that announces the subject of your research paper and your name. It must also be part of your portfolio. Make sure the cover is neat, eye-catching, and readable from six feet away. Graphics are an excellent way to make your cover attractive. This should be on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper only.

Include the following items on the booklet/ portfolio cover:

Title of Graduation Project **Topic**  
Title of Graduation Project **Research Paper**  
Graphic or picture representing the topic  
Title of Graduation Project **Product**  
Name of Student  
Student's **Yolasite URL**  
English Teacher's Name

See sample cover below.

### **The Environment**

#### **Rescuing the Sea Turtles of Coastal North Carolina**



**Nest Watch at the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center**

**Ashley Smith**  
[www.ashleymith.yolasite.com](http://www.ashleymith.yolasite.com)

**Mrs. Davis**

## Reflection Letter to Judges – Overview of Graduation Project

This letter will be part your initial contact with the judges who will be evaluating you. The letter serves as an explanation of your Graduation Project experience. As with your attire during your presentation, you need to use this letter to make the best first impression possible.

Follow **business letter format** (see **example for Mentor Thank You Letter**) and address the following:

- In the first paragraph, discuss the nature of your project and thoroughly explain to the judges why you chose the topic you did. At this point, it is okay to share personal stories that are related to your topic choice.
- Use the second paragraph to explain to the judges what you learned while completing this project. This should be about what you learned about YOURSELF on this journey.
- In the third paragraph, discuss your application of knowledge and problem solving skills. Explain how problem solving was used during the product development. Touch on the easiest and most difficult areas of the project, and tell how you predict this experience will benefit you later in life.

### Graduation Project Abstract

An abstract is a short informative or descriptive summary of a longer report. It is written after the report is completed, although it is intended to be read first. Despite the fact that an abstract is quite brief, it must do almost as much work as the multi-page paper. An abstract must be a fully self-contained description of the paper. It must make sense all by itself. An informative abstract summarizes the entire report and gives the reader an overview of the facts that will be laid out in detail in the paper itself. It is rarely longer than one page and should never exceed more than 10% of the length of the entire report; otherwise, it defeats its own purpose.

### Guidelines for the Abstract

In the first draft, note key facts, statistics, etc. that you need to include. Follow MLA guidelines while including the most pertinent information from your introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. **DO NOT** include a statement of scope; a sentence like “this paper will look at...” is inappropriate in an informative abstract. Be sure to omit or condense lengthy examples, tables and other supporting detail. Revise the draft into smooth, stand-alone prose; the abstract itself should be a miniature of the research paper. It should provide a brief summary of the findings of the paper, and should be a stand-alone document that can be understood without reading the paper.

1. Follow MLA guidelines (no heading required)
2. The title of your abstract should be the same as that of your research paper.
3. The abstract should be only one page in length.
4. Include your thesis statement.
5. The body should be descriptive, but concise. Say only what is essential. Write one or two sentences that summarize each section.
6. Make sure that it “flows” logically. Give it to a friend to read. Ask him/her if it makes sense.
7. Revise as necessary.
8. Type your final copy.

## Resume

Your resume summarizes who you are, what you have learned, and what you have accomplished. The information in your resume should include skills and achievements that give a potential college or employer a positive overview of your qualifications. The structure, organization, and overall appearance of your resume will give the judges an impression of you and your abilities. (See sample resume below.)

**Sally M. Student**  
5935 Raleigh Rd.  
Benson, NC 27504  
s.student@gmail.com  
(919) 555-5555

**Objective:** To obtain a four-year degree in the fields of history and journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Education:** West Johnston High School, Class of 2008

### Clubs and Activities:

*Varsity Cross Country	2004-Present
Captain	2006-Present
Varsity Winter and Spring Track	2004-Present
Captain	2007-Present
National Honors Society, President	2005-Present
*Interact Club, Local Projects Coordinator	2006-Present
Shakespeare Club, President	2005, '06 School year
Student Government Treasurer	2007, '08 School year

### Awards:

Principal's List	2002-Present
Morehead-Cain Scholar	2008
Meredith College Legacy Scholar	2008
Junior Marshall	2007
AP Scholar	2007
National Merit Finalist	2007
Wendy's High School Heisman State Finalist	2007
Coach's Award	2005

### Volunteer Work:

Ronald McDonald House of Chapel Hill, NC	2007-Present
Peer Tutoring	2004-Present
*Girls on the Run of the Triangle, Running Buddy	2006-Present
Will Beard Memorial 5K	2007, 2008
*North Carolina Governor's Page	2007
Backpack Buddies	2007
NC Museum of Natural Sciences	2007
Operation Christmas Child	2004, 2006, 2007
Ronald McDonald House Charity Drive	2006

### Work Experience:

Babysitting Children Ages 1 to 11	2002-Present
Jersey Mike's Sub Shop, Garner	2006-Present

## The Mentor Thank You Letter

Thank you letters show an extended effort to illustrate your gratitude to someone you appreciate. They build relationships and show your sincerity to someone who has extended an “extra effort” for you. The following is just an example. Make sure to personalize the letter so that your mentor feels your **sincere** appreciation.

### THANK YOU LETTER SAMPLE

David A. Jones  
5935 Raleigh Road  
Benson, North Carolina 27504

→Your Name  
→Your address

April 28, 2012

→Letter due date

Mr. John Smith  
2600 Rock Quarry Road  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27610

→Recipient’s name  
→Recipients Address

Dear Mr. Smith:

→include a colon after the name

I am writing to thank you for serving as my mentor for my Graduation Project. I am especially grateful for your willingness to take time out of your busy schedule to assist me these past months.

Your expertise proved invaluable during the product phase of my project. You provided me with great ideas that truly added to the success of my product, and I am aware of how fortunate I am to have chosen a mentor who could contribute so much up-to-date information about computer animation. The most interesting part of our meetings was our discussion of inventions. The inventions that you shared with me during that time have served to inspire me to pursue the field of computer animation as a major in college.

Again, I thank you for your guidance. I know that my Graduation Project was a success because of your dedication. You have played an important role in my high school career, and I am so appreciative.

Sincerely,

→Four spaces  
→Signature goes here

David A. Jones

## **Presentation Information and Guidelines**

Near the end of the semester, seniors will present the culmination of their work to a panel of approximately three community members selected to assess the student on the four phases of the Graduation Project. Prior to the student's presentation, the panel will survey the project booklet and e-portfolio in order to obtain an understanding of what the student accomplished. The booklet and e-portfolio will contain the documents verifying completion of the project and additional materials that help support the presentation. The student will speak 7-10 minutes on his or her research paper and product conception and completion. He or she will also discuss the challenges encountered and the lessons learned during the project phases. Upon completion of this oral summary of the project, the student must be prepared to field questions from the panel relating to the different phases of the project. The oral presentation phase of the project is, in essence, a self-evaluation which enables the student to reflect on what he or she has accomplished. The English IV teachers will instruct the students regarding the specifics to include in the board night presentation. A PowerPoint Presentation should be prepared for use during the presentation to the judges.

The **Presentation Rubric** is available on the WJHS website under the Graduation Project tab.